

YEP!

Youth Enrichment Program

Play, Learn, Create, Explore, Grow.

2025-2026

I Make a Difference Award



Made in Hayward

The Place to Be After

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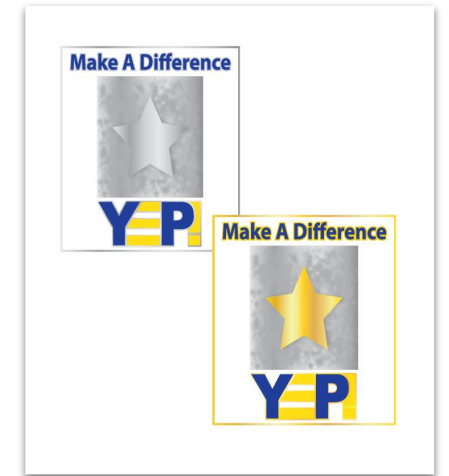
January - May

2026

YEP's I Make a Difference Award

The I Make a Difference Award recognizes YEP staff who demonstrate exemplary work in action, creating quality experiences for students in YEP Expanded Learning spaces.

- This recognition is grounded in the [Quality Standards for Expanded Learning Programs](#) established by the California Department of Education.
 - Please explain in detail why you are nominating the staff member or site and how they meet the quality standards in detail and show with examples.
- Each month, from September to May, YEP Management will review the nominations and select an Operations Supervisor, Site Coordinator, Program Leader, or site team to be recognized for the award.
- The deadline for 2026-2027 school year will be announced.
- The nomination form for the 2026-2027 school year will be shared in early August.



Quality Standard for Expanded Learning:

Active and engaged learning



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I Make A Difference January 2026 Quality Standard for Expanded Learning: Active and engaged learning

Cynthia Vertiz-Jimenez consistently demonstrates the Active and Engaged Learning Quality Standard through her intentional, hands-on approach to programming at Park YEP. She creates meaningful and interactive activities that inspire creativity, participation, and student growth while fostering a supportive and collaborative environment for both staff and students. Cynthia's dedication, clear communication, and enthusiasm make her an outstanding leader and a strong example of high-quality engaged learning in our program.

Cynthia Vertiz-Jimenez
YEP Program Leader
Park Elementary School

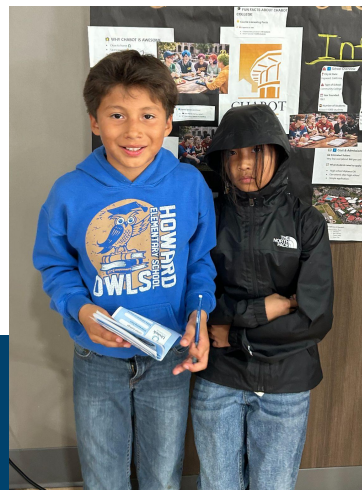
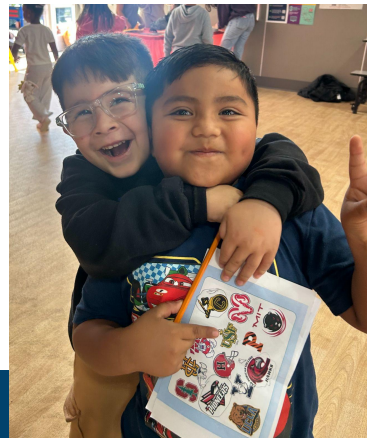


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Quality Standard for Expanded Learning:

Safe and supportive environment



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I Make A Difference

February 2026

Quality Standard for Expanded Learning: Safe and supportive environment

Jacqueline Palafox is being nominated for the YEP "I Make a Difference" Award for the positive impact she continues to make at Cherryland Elementary. She creates a safe, welcoming, and supportive environment where students feel valued, comfortable, and connected to the program. Her strong relationships with students, caring leadership, and dedication to fostering a sense of belonging make her an outstanding role model and an important part of the YEP community.

Jacqueline Gonzalez Palafox
YEP Site Coordinator
Cherryland Elementary School



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Quality Standard for Expanded Learning: Continuous quality improvement



Play, Learn, Create, Explore, Grow.



I Make A Difference March 2026

Quality Standard for Expanded Learning: Continuous quality improvement

In her third year as Site Coordinator at Eden Gardens YEP, Carla continues to meet expectations while demonstrating consistent growth and leadership. She effectively applies the tools and training provided by her supervisors to strengthen the program, improve site culture, and better meet the needs of students, families, and staff. Through her commitment to continuous improvement, staff development, and creating a fun and welcoming environment, Carla has made Eden Gardens YEP a place that students, families, program leaders, and school-day staff truly enjoy being a part of.

Carla Chaidez
YEP Site Coordinator
Eden Gardens Elementary School

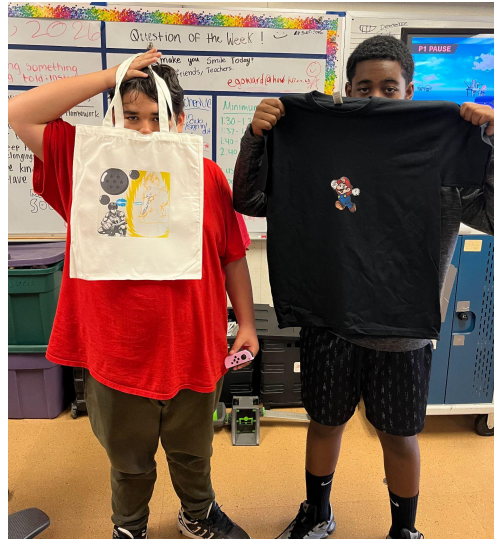


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Quality Standard for Expanded Learning:

Safe and supportive environment



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I Make A Difference April 2026

Quality Standard for Expanded Learning: Safe and supportive environment

Brandon consistently goes above and beyond to create a safe, supportive, and welcoming environment where students feel respected, valued, and connected to the program. He builds strong relationships with students through his patience, positivity, and ability to balance encouragement with high expectations for behavior and participation. Brandon's professionalism, strong communication, and commitment to student safety and well-being make him a trusted leader who handles challenges with care while fostering a positive and accountable environment for all students.

Brandon Ortega Gomez
YEP Program Leader
Winton Middle School



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Quality Standard for Expanded Learning:

Safe and supportive environment



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I Make A Difference May 2026

Quality Standard for Expanded Learning: Safe and supportive environment

Nathali exemplifies the heart of the Anthony Ochoa YEP program through her dedication to building meaningful relationships and creating student-centered experiences. She fosters a safe, supportive, and welcoming environment by approaching students with compassion, patience, and empathy while providing steady support during challenging situations. Through her leadership of the YEP News Club and commitment to student voice, Nathali continues to empower students and make a lasting impact on the school community.



Nathali Castro

**YEP Program Leader
Ochoa Middle School**



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Youth Enrichment Program

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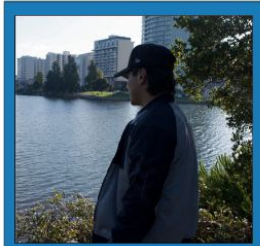


I Make A Difference Jan - May 2025-2026

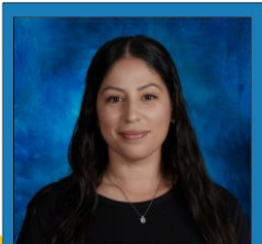
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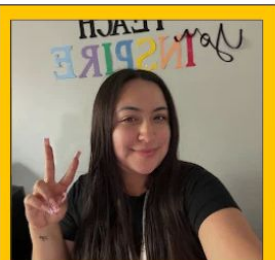
Jan 2026



April 2026



March 2026



Feb 2026



May 2026

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Thank you &
Congratulations!

“What YOU do makes a difference, and YOU have to decide what kind of difference YOU want to make.”
- Jane Goodall

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2025-2026

I Make a Difference Award



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October - December

2025

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- The deadline for the month of January 2026 is **January 30th, 2026**.
- The nomination form can be accessed [HERE](#).



Quality Standard for Expanded Learning:

Program Management



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I Make A Difference

October 2025

Quality Standard for Expanded Learning: Program Management

Andrea consistently ensures the program runs smoothly and with students' best interests at the center of every decision. She communicates clearly and proactively with staff to maintain alignment, strengthen teamwork, and support daily operations. Through her initiative in building program structures, supporting behavior management, and stepping in wherever needed, Andrea demonstrates exceptional reliability, flexibility, and leadership—making a meaningful and positive impact every day.

Andrea Arzate

YEP Site Coordinator
Cesar Chavez Middle School



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Quality Standard for Expanded Learning:

Clear vision, mission, and purpose



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I Make A Difference

October 2025

Quality Standard for Expanded Learning:
Clear vision, mission and purpose

Scarlette consistently leads with purpose and clarity, modeling our program's mission in her daily work. She takes initiative, manages middle school behavior with confidence and respect, and supports her team without hesitation. By promoting student leadership through YAC participation and meaningful in-group roles, she keeps students engaged and accountable. Her thoughtful communication, organization, and commitment to leading by example make her an invaluable part of our program's success.

Scarlette Galan Cortez

YEP Program Leader
Cesar Chavez Middle School



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Quality Standard for Expanded Learning:

Quality Staff



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I Make A Difference

November 2025

Quality Standard for Expanded Learning: Quality staff

Nancy Fuentes consistently exemplifies excellence in inclusivity, collaboration, and staff support within the YEP program. She leads inclusive family engagement events that foster belonging and strengthen community connections, while motivating staff through teamwork, recognition, and positive support. Nancy also supports program operations, communication, and collaboration with school-day partners, increasing coordination and program awareness. Her dedication and leadership make her highly deserving of recognition as a Quality Staff member.

Nancy Fuentes

YEP Site Coordinator
Stonebrae Elementary School



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Quality Standard for Expanded Learning:

Quality Staff



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I Make A Difference

November 2025

Quality Standard for Expanded Learning: Quality staff

Dom is an exceptional staff member who helps make the program a fun, safe, and welcoming space for all. He supports students and the school community by leading lunchtime activities, serving as a second-year YAC advisor, and managing the YEP Store at Winton. Dom is a strong role model who engages students through meaningful interactions that encourage responsibility and positive behavior. His support of YEP-wide marketing efforts reflects his commitment, making him a valuable asset to Winton's YEP program and YEP as a whole.

Dominic Sanchez

**YEP Program Leader
Winton Middle School**



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Quality Standard for Expanded Learning:

Quality Staff



Youth Enrichment Program

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I Make A Difference

December 2025

Quality Standard for Expanded Learning: Quality staff

Irvin demonstrates exceptional dedication to the success of the Bridge to College program by going above and beyond to support student enrollment and access. Despite challenges, he used creative problem-solving, flexibility, and strong collaboration with his site team and families to move the program forward. His professionalism, openness to feedback, and ability to balance site operations with added responsibilities reflect a strong commitment to continuous improvement and student success.

Irvin Araiza

YEP Operations Supervisor
Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School



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Quality Standard for Expanded Learning:

Active and engaged learning



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I Make A Difference

December 2025

Quality Standard for Expanded Learning:
Active and engaged learning

Alexis is a dedicated Program Leader who consistently excels in creating an active, engaging, and safe learning environment. She is committed to professional growth and goes above and beyond to make each day meaningful for her kindergarten students through enrichment and a positive classroom culture. As a collaborative and supportive leader, Alexis sets a strong example for her peers and represents the high standard of excellence at Eden Gardens.

Alexis De La O

YEP Program Leader
Eden Gardens Elementary School



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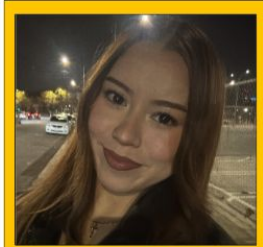
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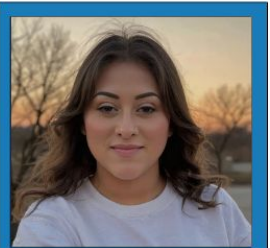


Oct 2025

I Make A Difference Oct - Dec 2025-2026



Oct 2025



Nov 2025

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Nov 2025



Dec 2025



Dec 2025

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Thank you & Congratulations!

“There is no greater reward than working from your heart, and making a difference in the world.” - Carlos Santana

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2025-2026

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September 2025

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Quality Standard for Expanded Learning:

Quality Staff



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I Make A Difference

September 2025

Quality Standard for Expanded Learning: Quality Staff

Mariah Chandler has shown remarkable growth and leadership in her transition from Youth Professional to Program Leader. She creates a warm, engaging environment for TK and Kindergarten students while collaborating effectively with her team to deliver meaningful enrichment activities. Mariah's strong relationships with Southgate teachers and families have strengthened the bond between YEP and the school community, reflecting her dedication, compassion, and commitment to student growth.

Mariah Chandler

YEP Program Leader
Southgate Elementary School



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Quality Standard for Expanded Learning:

Quality Staff



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I Make A Difference

September 2025

Quality Standard for Expanded Learning: Quality Staff

Jazmin is an exceptional staff member whose dedication and reliability consistently stand out. As a college student, she models responsibility and perseverance, often arriving early and staying late to support the program. Now in her second year volunteering with YAC, Jazmin continues to foster a safe, welcoming environment for students while bringing valuable experience and commitment to the Treeview program.

Jazmin Cruz

YEP Program Leader
Treeview Elementary School



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I Make A Difference

Septemeber 2025-2026



Sept 2025

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Sept 2025

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